

Announcements - Christ is Risen!

- **Welcome guests and visitors!** We are very glad that you joined us this morning and hope you have enjoyed the beauty of today's service. Please approach Fr. Philip at the end and introduce yourself to him. You are invited to our fellowship meal downstairs.
- **Names Day and Birthday:** Irina Zlotnikova (both!)
- **Zeffy: we have a new donation app where they don't charge a fee! Please start to use it *instead* of PayPay or Venmo**



This week at Christ the Saviour

Ascension: Vigil Wed. May 20th 6pm. Liturgy Thurs. May 21 10.00

'Why We Reject Christ' by Fr James Guirguis on the Blind Man

In our world, and perhaps since the foundation of the world, Satan has sought to divide and confuse people. He does this in subtle and not so subtle ways. He finds reasons for us to be divided and not at peace with one another. He will use any and everything at his disposal in order to achieve his objectives. He divides Christians along denominational lines, so that they will not enter into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and be healed. He divides citizens along political lines. He makes us believe that there is such a gap between republicans and democrats that they cannot be civil with one another, or love one another. He wants to divide us along any possible line. He seeks to divide by race, gender, class, ideology. He seeks to divide by any means because he is the one who divides. His very name means adversary. (cont. inside)

Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church



Sunday, May 17th 2026

Archpriest Philip Halliwell, Rector

The Blind Man

2040, Anza St.

San Francisco

www.sobor.org

Orthodox Church in America

Diocese of the West

Welcome to Christ the Saviour!

Join us for lunch downstairs after the service!

+ Yet, in today's gospel we are given a glimpse into truth. The Lord Jesus, the Word of God, teaches us that there is one thing that properly separates us and creates two distinct groups; blindness and sight. We begin with a focus on the physical blindness of the man who was born blind. The problem is the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees. We see then that the world can properly be divided into two groups. Those with spiritual sight and those with spiritual blindness. Our Lord says to His disciples "I am the light of the world." What divides us or unites us is our acceptance of Jesus Christ as the light of the world. Either we are truly blind or we can really see. + When Christ is not the light of your world, everything is darkness. But when Jesus Christ is the light of your world, you begin to see clearly. Everything takes on a new look, everything is exposed and healed by the light of Christ. As Christians, it is very important that we take this seriously. Our guiding principle in life and in our interaction with the world around us is not our political leanings or our "personal opinions" or feelings. If you are guided by your personal feelings, you might as well create an image of yourself, pray before it and offer it sacrifices. Be honest with yourself and choose whom you will follow, yourself or the Lord Jesus Christ, His life and His teachings. You may be thinking "I would like to follow Jesus, but how can I be sure that I am following Him and not my own opinions?" The answer is to take seriously the work of studying the Bible and especially the four gospels. Our serious study of the gospels requires a small sacrifice of our time, and a big sacrifice of our own thoughts and opinions. If you study the words of the Lord, His light will expose your deficiencies and your inner darkness. Sometimes this is painful, it is like laser surgery. But sometimes surgery is necessary for healing to begin. + Although their physical eyes worked quite well, the Pharisees struggled to see the spiritual light. They were quite confident in their ways and according to the Lord, this way of rejection of the light was in actuality, darkness. Why? Because of their pride. St. Tikhon of Zadonsk once said "When pride retreats from a man, humility begins to dwell in him, and the more pride is diminished, so much more does humility grow. The one gives way to the other as to its opposite. Darkness departs and light appears. Pride is darkness, but humility is

light." + Lest we seem to only be picking on the Pharisees, we should recognize that within each of us there are aspects of the pride of the Pharisees. We each have hidden, secret pride that we carry and treasure deep within us. + St. Justin Popovic writes "It can be said: pride is the ultimate sin. Every sin, through its life force, comes from it and holds to it: "the pride of life"—woven from countless multifarious(various) prides, both great and small, both short-term and long term. Let us remember the primary things: the pride of glory (scientific, government, in any rank or position in general), pride of beauty, pride of wealth, pride of benevolence, pride of humility (yes! of humility), pride of charity, pride of success...There is not a virtue that pride cannot convert into a vice. The pride of prayer converts the person praying into a Pharisee, and the ascetic into a self-murderer. So, every sin, in reality is a sin through pride, because Satan is in reality Satan through pride. If it were not for pride, sin would not exist, neither in the angelic or the human world...." + It is this pride that Christ searches out and exposes to the light through our honest and authentic Christian life. A life that we choose to fill with the word of God and with prayer. A life that we fill with the sacraments and with worship. This allows us to enter into a dialogue with the Holy Trinity. It won't happen by merely repeating words with vain repetitions, but when we actually pray with pain of heart. This type of prayer exposes our darkness to His divine light and opens us up to receive His healing. That is why we believe and why we love Him, because He first loved us. He offered and continues to offer us His healing and His life of resurrection. + This light was offered to the Pharisees but they rejected it. They were full of pride in themselves and in their knowledge and they lacked love. Like recognizes like. Only the one who struggles for love and humility can recognize the humble and loving hand of the Savior in their lives. Without love for God, we won't recognize His light but will reject it as darkness. So let us not be confident in ourselves, but in the One who alone has the power to give sight to the blind and life to those who are in the tombs, to Christ our immortal Lord, be the glory now and ever and unto ages of ages AMEN.